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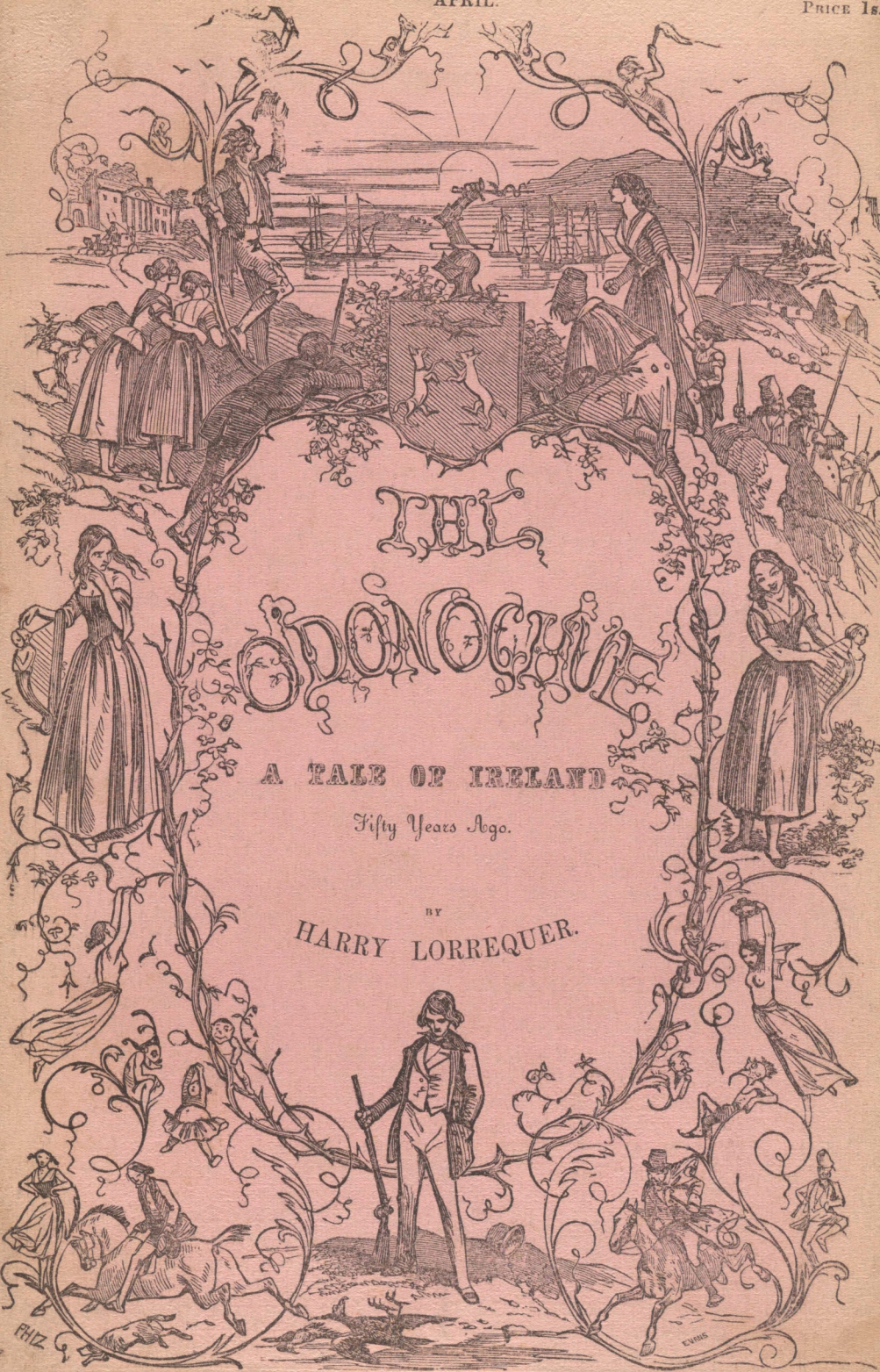

THE O'DONOGHUE

A TALE OF IRELAND

Fifty Years Ago.

BY

HARRY LORREQUER.

WILLIAM CURRY, JUN. AND CO., SACKVILLE-STREET, DUBLIN.

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Sir Archy, in a dilemma.

Roach's Conveniency.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GLEN AT MIDNIGHT.

"WHAT have you got there, Mark?" called out the O'Donoghue, as the young man threw the still insensible figure of the Doctor upon the sofa.

"Old Roach, of Killarney," answered Mark sullenly. "That confounded fool, Kerry, must have been listening at the door there, to what we were saying, and took him for Cassidy, the sub-sheriff; he fired a charge of slugs at him—that's certain; but I don't think there's much mischief done." As he spoke, he filled a goblet with wine, and without any waste of ceremony, poured it down the Doctor's throat. "You're nothing the worse, man," added he, roughly; "you've given many a more dangerous dose yourself, I'll be bound, and people have survived it too."

"I'm better now," said Roach, in a faint voice; "I feel something better; but may I never leave this spot if I don't prosecute that scoundrel, O'Leary. It was all malice—I can swear to that."

"Not a bit of it, Roach; Mark says the fellow mistook you for Cassidy."

"No, no—don't tell me that: he knew me well; but I foresaw it all. He filled my pony with water; I might as well be rolling a barrel before me, as try to drive him this morning. The rascal had a spite against me for giving him nothing; but he shall hang for it."

"Come, come, Roach, don't be angry; it's all past and over now; the fellow did it for the best."

"Did it for the best! Fired a loaded blunderbuss into a fellow-creature for the best!"

"To be sure he did," broke in Mark, with an imperious look and tone. "There's no harm done, and you need not make such a work about it."

"Where's the pony and the gig, then?" called out Roach, suddenly remembering the last sight he had of them.

"I heard the old beast clattering down the glen, as if he had fifty kettles at his tail. They'll stop him at last; and if they shouldn't, I don't suppose it matters much: the whole yoke wasn't worth a five

pound note—no, even giving the owner into the bargain," muttered he, as he turned away.

The indignity of this speech acted like a charm upon Roach; as if galvanised by the insult, he sat bolt upright on the sofa, and thrust his hands down to the deepest recesses of his breeches pockets, his invariable signal for close action. "What, sir, do you tell me that my conveniency, with the pony, harness and all ——"

"Have patience, Roach," interposed the old man; "Mark was but jesting. Come over and join us here." At the same instant the door was flung suddenly wide, and Sir Archy rushed in, with a speed very unlike his ordinary gait. "There's a change for the better," cried he, joyfully; "the boy has made a rally, and if we could overtake that d—d auld beestie, Roach, and bring him back again, we might save the lad."

"The d——d auld beestie," exclaimed Roach, as he sprung from the sofa and stood before him, "is very much honoured by your flattering mention of him." Then turning towards the O'Donoghue, he added—"Take your turn out of me now, when you have me; for, by the Father of Physic, you'll never see Denis Roach under this roof again."

The O'Donoghue laughed till his face streamed with the emotion, and he rocked in his chair like one in a convulsion. "Look, Archy," cried he—"see now!—hear me, Roach," were the only words he could utter between the paroxysms, while M'Nab, the very picture of shame and confusion, stood overwhelmed with his blunder, and unable to say a word.

"Let us not stand fooling here," said Mark, gruffly, as he took the Doctor's arm; "come and see my brother, and try what can be done for him."

With an under-growl of menace and rage, old Roach suffered himself to be led away by the young man, Sir Archy following slowly, as they mounted the stairs.

Although alone, the O'Donoghue continued to laugh over the scene he had just witnessed; nor did he know which to enjoy more—the stifled rage of the Doctor, or the mingled shame and distress of M'Nab. It was, indeed, a rare thing to obtain such an occasion for triumph over Sir Archy, whose studied observance of all the courtesies and proprieties of life, formed so strong a contrast with his own careless and indifferent habits.

"Archy will never get over it—that's certain, and begad he shan't do so for want of a reminder. The d——d auld beestie!" and with the words came back his laughter, which had not ceased as Mark re-entered

the room. "Well, lad," he cried, "have they made it up—what has Sir Archy done with him?"

"Herbert's better," said the youth, in a low deep voice, and with a look that sternly rebuked the heartless forgetfulness of his father.

"Ah! better, is he? Well, that is good news, Mark; and Roach thinks he may recover?"

"He has a chance now; a few hours will decide it. Roach will sit up with him till four o'clock, and then, I shall take the remainder of the night, for my uncle seems quite worn out with watching."

"No, Mark, my boy, you must not lose your night's rest; you've had a long and tiresome ride to-day."

"I'm not tired, and I'll do it," replied he, in the determined tone of his self-willed habit—one, which his father had never sought to control, from infancy upwards. There was a long pause after this, which Mark broke, at length, by saying—"So, it is pretty clear now that our game is up—the mortgage is foreclosed. Hemsworth has noticed the Ballyvourney tenants not to pay us the rents, and the ejectment goes on."

"What of Callaghan?" asked the O'Donoghue, in a sinking voice.

"Refused—flatly refused to renew the bills. If we give him five hundred down," said the youth, with a bitter laugh, "he says, he'd strain a point."

"You told him how we were circumstanced, Mark? Did you mention about Kate's money?"

"No," said Mark, sternly, as his brows met in a savage frown. "No, sir, I never said a word of it. She shall not be made a beggar of, for our faults. I told you before, and I tell you now, I'll not suffer it."

"But hear me, Mark. It is only a question of time. I'll repay ——"

"Repay!" was the scornful echo of the young man, as he turned a withering glance at his father.

"Then there's nothing but ruin before us," said the O'Donoghue, in a solemn tone—"nothing!"

The old man's head fell forward on his bosom, and, as his hands dropped listlessly down at either side, he sat the very impersonation of overwhelming affliction, while Mark, with heavy step and slow, walked up and down the roomy chamber.

"Hemsworth's clerk hinted something about this old banker's intention of building here," resumed he, after a long interval of silence.

"Building where?—over at 'the Lodge?'"

"No, here—at Carrig-na-curra—throwing down this old place, I suppose, and erecting a modern villa instead."

"What!" exclaimed the O'Donoghue, with a look of fiery indignation. "Are they going to grub us out, root and branch? Is it not enough to banish the old lords of the soil, but they must remove their very landmarks also?"

"It is for that he's come here, I've no doubt," resumed Mark; "he only waited to have the whole estate in his possession, which this term will give him."

"I wish he had waited a little longer—a year, or at most, two, would have been enough," said the old man, in a voice of great dejection, then added, with a sickly smile—"You have little affection for the old walls, Mark."

The youth made no reply, and he went on—"Nor is it to be wondered at. You never knew them in their happy days! but I did, Mark—ay, that I did. I mind the time well, when your grandfather was the head of this great county—when the proudest and the best in the land stood uncovered when he addressed them, and deemed the highest honour they could receive, an invitation to this house. In the very room where we are sitting, I've seen thirty guests assembled, whose names comprised the rank and station of the province; and yet, all—every man of them, regarded him as their chief, and he was so, too—the descendant of one who was a king."

The animated features of the young man, as he listened, encouraged the O'Donoghue, and he went on. "Thirty-seven thousand acres descended to my grandfather, and even that was but a moiety of our former possessions."

"Enough of this," interrupted Mark rudely. "It is but an unprofitable theme. The game is up, father," added he, in a deep stern voice, "and I, for one, have little fancy to wait for the winner to claim the stakes. Could I but see you safely out of the scrape, I'd be many a mile away, ere a week was over."

"You would not leave me, boy!" cried the old man, as he grasped the youth's hands in his, and gazed on him with streaming eyes. "You would not desert your poor old father. Oh, no—no, Mark; this would not be like you. A little patience, my child, and death will save you that cruelty."

The young man's chest heaved and fell like a swelling wave; but he never spoke, nor changed a muscle of his rigid features.

"I have borne all misfortunes well till now," continued the father. "I cared little on my own account, Mark; my only sorrow was for you; but so long as we were together, boy—so long as hand in hand we stood against the storm, I felt that my courage never failed me. Stay

by me, then, Mark—tell me that whatever comes, you'll never leave me. Let it not be said, that when age and affliction fell upon the O'Donoghue, his son—the boy of his heart—deserted him. You shall command in every thing," said he, with an impassioned tone, as he fixed his eyes upon the youth's countenance. "I ask for nothing but to be near you. The house—the property—all shall be yours."

"What house—what property—do you speak of?" said Mark, rudely. "Are we not beggars?"

The old man's head dropped heavily; he relinquished the grasp of his son's hand, and his outstretched arm fell powerless to his side. "I was forgetting," murmured he, in a broken voice—"it is as you say—you are right, Mark—you *must* go."

Few and simple as the words were, the utterance sunk deep into the young man's heart; they seemed the last effort of courage wrung from despair, and breathed a pathos he was unable to resist.

"I'll not leave you," said he, in a voice scarce louder than a whisper: "there's my hand upon it," and he wrung in his strong grasp the unresisting fingers of the old man. "That's a promise, father, and now let us speak no more about it."

"I'll get to my bed, Mark," said the O'Donoghue, as he pressed his hands upon his throbbing temples. It was many a day since anything like emotion had moved him, and the conflict of passion had worn and exhausted him. "Good-night, my boy—my own boy;" and he fell upon the youth's shoulder, half choked with sobs.

As the O'Donoghue slowly ascended the stairs, towards his bedroom, Mark threw himself upon a chair, and buried his face in his hands. His sorrow was a deep one. The resolve he had just abandoned, had been for many a day the cherished dream of his heart—his comfort under every affliction—his support against every difficulty. To seek his fortune in some foreign service—to win an honourable name, even though in a strange land, was the whole ambition of his life; and so engrossed was he in his own calculations, that he never deigned a thought of what his father might feel about it. The poverty that eats its way to the heart of families seldom fails to loosen the ties of domestic affection. The daily struggle, the hourly conflict with necessity, too often destroy the delicate and trustful sense of protection that youth should feel towards age. The energies that should have expanded into homely affection and mutual regard, are spent in warding off a common enemy; and with weary minds and seared hearts the gentler charities of life have few sympathies. Thus was it here. Mark mistook his selfishness for a feeling of indepen-

dence; he thought indifference to others meant confidence in himself—and he was not the first who made the mistake.

Tired with thinking, and harassed with difficulties, through which he could see no means of escape, he threw open the window, to suffer the cool night air to blow upon his throbbing temples, and sat down beside the casement, to enjoy its refreshing influence. The candles had burned down in the apartment, and the fire, now reduced to a mere mass of red embers, scarce threw a gleam beyond the broad hearth-stone. The old tower itself flung a dark shadow upon the rock, and across the road beneath it, and, except in the chamber of the sick boy, in a distant part of the building, not a light was to be seen.

The night was calm and star-lit: a stillness almost painful reigned around. It seemed as if exhausted nature, tired with the work of storm and hurricane, had sunk into a deep and wearied sleep. Thousands of bright stars speckled the dark sky; yet the light they shed upon the earth, but dimly distinguished mountain and valley, save where the calm surface of the lake gave back their lustre, in a heaven, placid and motionless as their own. Now and then, a bright meteor would shoot across the blue vault, and disappear in the darkness; while in tranquil splendour, the planets shone on, as though to say, the higher destiny is to display an eternal brightness, than the brilliancy of momentary splendour, however glittering its wide career.

The young man gazed upon the sky. The lessons which, from human lips, he had rejected with scorn and impatience, now sunk deeply into his nature, from those silent monitors. The stars looked down, like eyes, into his very soul, and he felt as if he could unburthen his whole heart of its weary load, and make a confidence with heaven.

"*They* point ever downwards," said he to himself, as he watched the bright streak of the falling stars, and moralized on their likeness to man's destiny. But as he spoke, a red line shot up into the sky, and broke into ten thousand glittering spangles, shedding over glen and mountain, a faint but beauteous gleam, scarce more lasting than the meteor's flash. It was a rocket sent up from the border of the Bay, and was quickly answered by another from the remote end of the Glen. The youth started, and leaning out from the window, looked down the valley; but nothing was to be seen or heard—all was silent as before, and already the flash of the signals, for such they must have been he could not doubt, had faded away, and the sky shone in its own spangled beauty.

"They are smugglers!" muttered Mark, as he sank back in his chair; for in that wild district such signals were employed without much fear,

by those who either could trust the revenue as accomplices, or dare them by superior numbers. More than once it had occurred to him to join this lawless band, and many a pressing invitation had he received from the leaders to do so; but still, the youth's ambition, save in his darkest hours, took a higher and a nobler range: the danger of the career was its only fascination to him. Now, however, all these thoughts were changed: he had given a solemn pledge to his father never to leave him; and it was with a feeling of half apathy he sat, pondering over what cutter it might be that had anchored, or whose party were then preparing to land their cargo.

"Ambrose Denner, belike," muttered he to himself, "the Flemish fellow, from the Scheldt—a greedy old scoundrel too, he refused a passage to a poor wretch that broke the jail in Limerick, because he could not pay for it. I wish the people here may remember it to him. Maybe its Hans "der Teufel," though, as they call him; or Flahault—he's the best of them, if there be a difference. I've half a mind to go down the Glen and see;" and while he hesitated, a low, monotonous sound of feet, as if marching, struck on his ear; and as he listened, he heard the distant tramp of men, moving in, what seemed, a great number. These could not be the smugglers, he well knew: reckless and fearless as they were, they never came in such large bodies as these noises portended.

There is something solemn in the sound of marching heard in the stillness of the night, and so Mark felt it, as with cautious breathing he leaned upon the window, and bent his ear to listen. Nearer and nearer they came, till at last the footfalls beat loudly on the dull ground as, in measured tread, they stepped. At first a dark moving mass, that seemed to fill the narrow road, was all he could discern, but as this came closer, he could perceive that they marched in companies or divisions, each headed by his leader, who, from time to time, stepped from his place, and observed their order and precision. They were all country people; their dress, as well as he could discern, the common costume of every day, undistinguished by any military emblem. Nor did they carry arms; the captains alone wore a kind of white scarf over the shoulder, which could be distinctly seen, even by the imperfect light. They, alone, carried swords, with which they checked the movements from time to time. Not a word was uttered in the dense ranks —not a murmur broke the stillness of the solemn scene, as that host poured on. The one command, "Right shoulders forward—wheel!" being given at intervals, as the parties defiled beneath the rock, at which place the road made an abrupt turning.

So strange the spectacle, so different from all he had ever witnessed

or heard of, the youth more than once half doubted lest, a wearied and fevered brain had not called up the illusion; but as he continued to gaze on the moving multitude, he was assured of its reality; and now was he harassed by conjectures what it all should mean. For nearly an hour—to him it seemed many such—the human tide flowed on, till at length the sounds grew fainter, and the last party moved by, followed, at a little distance, by two figures on horseback. Their long cloaks concealed the wearers completely from his view, but he could distinctly mark the steel scabbards of swords, and hear their heavy clank against the horses' flanks.

Suffering their party to proceed, the horsemen halted for a few seconds at the foot of the rock, and as they reined in, one called out to the other, in a voice, every syllable of which fell distinctly on Mark's ears—

"That's the place, Godfrey; and even by this light you can judge of its strength."

"But why is he not with us?" said the other hastily. "Has he not an inheritance to win back—a confiscation to wipe out?"

"True enough," said the first speaker; "but eighty winters do not improve a man's nerve for an hazardous exploit. He has a son though, and, as I hear, a bold fellow."

"Look to him, Harvey: it is of moment that we should have one so near the Bay. See to this quickly. If he be like what you say, and desires a command——" The rest was lost in the sound of their retreating hoofs, for already the party resumed their journey, and were in a few minutes hidden from his view.

With many a conflicting doubt, and many a conjecture, each wilder than the other, Mark pondered over what he had seen, nor noted the time as it slipped past, till the grey tint of day-dawn warned him of the hour. The rumbling sounds of a country cart just then attracted his attention, and he beheld a countryman, with a little load of turf, on his way to the market at Killarney. Seeing that the man must have met the procession, he called aloud—

"I say, my good man, where were they all marching, to-night—those fellows?"

"What fellows, your honour?" said the man, as he touched his hat obsequiously.

"That great crowd of people—you could not help meeting them—there was no other road they could take."

"Sorra man, woman, or child I seen, your honour, since I left home, and that's eight miles from this," and so saying he followed his journey, leaving Mark in greater bewilderment than before.

CHAPTER XIII.

"THE GUARDSMAN."

LEAVING for a brief season Glenflesk and its inhabitants, we shall ask of our readers to accompany us to London, to a scene somewhat different from that of our last chapter.

In a handsomely furnished drawing-room in St. James's street, where the appliances of ease and luxury were blended with the evidence of those tastes so popular among young men of fashion of the period, sat, or rather lay, in a deep cushioned arm-chair, a young officer, who, even in the dishabille of the morning, and with the evident traces of fatigue and dissipation on his brow, was strikingly handsome. Though not more than three or four-and-twenty, the habits of his life, and the assured features of his character, made him appear several years older. In figure he was tall and well-proportioned, while his countenance bore those lineaments which are pre-eminently distinguished as Saxon,—massive but well-chiselled features, the harmony of whose expression is even more striking than their individual excellence, a look of frank daring, which many were prone to attribute to superciliousness, was the most marked trait in his face, nor was the impression lessened by a certain "*hauteur*," which military men of the time assumed, and which, he, in particular, somewhat prided himself on.

The gifts of fortune and the graces of person will often seem to invest their possessor with attributes of insolence and overbearing, which are, in reality, nothing more than the unbridled buoyancy of youth and power revelling in its own exercise.

We have no fancy to practise mystery with our reader, and shall at once introduce him to Frederick Travers, Sir Marmaduke's only son, and Captain in the first regiment of Guards. Wealth and good looks were about as popular fifty years ago, as they are in the year we write in, and Frederick Travers was as universal a favorite in the circles he frequented as any man of his day. Courtly manners, spirits nothing could depress, a courage nothing could daunt, expensive tastes, gratified as rapidly as they were conceived, were all accessaries which won their way among his acquaintances, and made them proud of his intimacy, and boastful of his friendship. That circumstances like these

should have rendered a young man self-willed and imperious, is not to be wondered at, and such was he in reality—less, however, from the unlimited license of his position, than from an hereditary feature which distinguished every member of his family, and made them as intolerant of restraint, as they were wayward in purpose. The motto of their house was the index of their character, and in every act and thought they seemed under the influence of their emblazoned inscription, "'A tort et à travers."

Over his father, Frederick Travers exercised an unlimited influence; from his boyhood upward he had never met a contradiction, and the natural goodness of his temper, and the affectionate turn of his disposition, made the old man believe in the excellence of a system, whose success lay less in its principle, than in the virtue of him, on whom it was practised.

Sir Marmaduke felt proud of his son's career in the world, and enjoyed to the utmost all the flattery which the young man's acceptance in society conferred; he was proud of him, almost as much as he was fond of him, and a letter from Frederick had always the effect of restoring his spirits, no matter how deep their depression the moment before.

The youth returned his father's affection with his whole heart; he knew and valued all the high and generous principles of his nature; he estimated with an honest pride those gifts which had won Sir Marmaduke the esteem and respect of his fellow-citizens; but yet, he thought he could trace certain weaknesses of character, from which his own more enlarged sphere of life had freed him.

Fashionable associates, the society of men of wit and pleasure, seem often to suggest more acute and subtle views of life, than are to be obtained in less exalted and distinguished company; the smart sayings and witty epigrams which are current among clever men appear to be so many texts in the wisdom of the world. Nothing is more common than this mistake; nothing more frequent than to find, that intercourse with such people diffuses few, if any, of their distinguishing merits among their less gifted associates, who rarely learn any thing from the intercourse, but a hearty contempt for all who are debarred from it. Frederick was of this school; the set he moved in was his religion—their phrases, their prejudices, their passions, he regarded as standards for all imitation. It is not surprising, then, if he conceived many of his father's notions obsolete and antiquated, and had they not been his, he would have treated them as ridiculous.

This somewhat tedious explanation of a character with whom we have not any very lengthened business hereafter, demands some

apology from us, still, without it we should be unable to explain to our reader the reason of those events to whose narrative we are hastening.

On the table, among the materials of a yet untasted breakfast, lay an open letter, of which, from time to time, the young man read, and as often threw from him, with expressions of impatience and anger. A night of more than ordinary dissipation had made him irritable, and the contents of the epistle did not seem of a character to calm him.

"I knew it" said he at last, as he crushed the letter in his hand. "I knew it, well; my poor father is unfit to cope with those savages; what could ever have persuaded him to venture among them I know not! the few hundreds a year the whole estate produces, are not worth as many weeks' annoyance. Hemsworth knows them well; he is the only man fit to deal with them. Heigho!" said he, with a sigh, "there is nothing for it I suppose, but to bring them back again as soon as may be—and this confounded accident Hemsworth has met with in the Highlands, will lay him on his back these five weeks—I must e'en go myself. Yet nothing was ever more ill-timed. The Queen's fête at Frogmore, fixed for Wednesday; there's the tennis match on Friday,—and Saturday, the first day of the Stag hounds. It is too bad. Hemsworth is greatly to blame; he should have been candid about these people, and not have made his Pandemonium an Arcadia. My father is also to blame; he might have asked my advice about this trip; and Sybella, too—why didn't she write? She above all should have warned me about the folly;" and thus did he accuse in turn all the parties concerned in a calamity, which, after all, he saw chiefly reflected in the inconvenience it caused himself.

Now, assuredly, Hemsworth requires some vindication at our hands. It had never entered into that worthy man's most imaginative conceptions, to believe a visit from Sir Marmaduke to his Irish property within the reach of possibility; for although, as we have already said, he was in the constant habit of entreating Sir Marmaduke to bestow this mark of condescension on his Irish tenants, he ever contrived to accompany the recommendation with certain casual hints about the habits and customs of the natives, as might well be supposed sufficient to deter a more adventurous traveller than the old baronet; and while he pressed him to come, and see for himself, he at the same time plied him with newspapers and journals, whose columns were crammed with the fertile theme of outrage; the editorial comments on which often indicated a barbarism even deeper than the offence they affected to deplore. The accident which ultimately led to Sir Mar-

maduke's hurried journey, was a casualty which Hemsworth had overlooked, and when he heard that the family were actually domesticated at "the Lodge," his regrets were indeed great. It was only on the day before the intelligence reached him—for the letter had followed him from place to place for a fortnight—that he had the misfortune to break his leg, by a fall from a cliff in deer shooting. Whatever the urgency of the measure, he was totally incapable of undertaking a journey to Ireland, whither, under other circumstances, he would have hastened with all speed. Hemsworth's correspondent, of whom we shall have occasion to speak more, hereafter, was the sub-agent of the estate,—a creature of his own, in every sense, and far more in his interest, than in that of his principal. He told him, in forcible terms, how Sir Marmaduke had commenced his work of Irish reformation; that, already, both the baronet and his daughter had undertaken the task of improvement among the tenantry; that rents were to be lowered, school-houses erected, medical aid provided for the sick and suffering, more comfortable dwellings built, more liberal wages allowed; he narrated, how rapidly the people, at first suspicious and distrustful, were learning to feel confidence in their benefactor, and anxious to avail themselves of his benevolence; but more than all, he dwelt upon the conviction, which every hour gained ground among them, that Hemsworth had misrepresented the landlord, and that, so far from being himself the instrument of, he had been the obstacle to, their welfare and happiness. The letter concluded with a pressing entreaty for his speedy return to "the Lodge," as, should he be longer absent, the mischief would become past remedy.

Never did agent receive an epistle more alarming; he saw the game, for which he had been playing half a lifetime, slip from him at the very moment of winning. For above twenty years his heart was set upon becoming the owner of the estate; all his plans, his plots, his machinations, had no other end or object. From the deepest stroke of his policy, to the most trivial act of his power, he had held this in view. By his artful management a veil was intercepted between the landlord and the people, which no acuteness on either side could penetrate. The very acts intended as benefits by the owner of the soil, passed through such a medium, that they diverged from their destined direction, and fell, less as blessings than inflictions. The landlord was taught to regard the tenant, as incurably sunk in barbarism, ignorance, and superstition. The tenant to suppose the landlord, a cruel, unfeeling task-master, with no care but for his rent; neither sympathy for their sufferings, nor sorrow for their calamities. Hems-

worth played his game like a master; for while obtaining the smallest amount of rental for his chief, he exacted the most onerous and impoverishing terms from the people. Thus diminishing the apparent value of the property, he hoped one day to be able to purchase, and at the same time preparing it for becoming a lucrative and valuable possession, for although the rents were nominally low, the amount of fees and "duty-labor" were enormous. There was scarcely a man upon the property whose rent was paid to the day and hour, and for the favour of some brief delay, certain services were exacted, which virtually reduced the tenants to a vassalage the most miserable and degrading.

If, then, the eye ranged over a district of a poverty-struck and starving peasantry, with wretched hovels, naked children, and rude, unprofitable tillage, let the glance but turn to the farm around "the Lodge," and, there, the trim fences, the well-weeded corn, and the nicely-cultivated fields, were an evidence of what well-directed labour could effect; and the astounding lesson seemed to say:—Here is an object for imitation. Look at yonder wheat: see that clover, and the meadow beyond it. They could all do likewise. Their land is the same, the climate the same, the rent the same; but yet ignorance and obstinacy are incurable. They will not be taught—prefer their own barbarous ways to newer and better methods—in fact, are beyond the lessons of either precept or example.

Yet what was the real case? To till that model-farm, to make these fields the perfection you see them, families were starving—age, left to totter to the grave, uncared-for—manhood, pining in want and misery, and infancy, to dawn upon suffering, to last a life long. Duty-labour calls the poor man from the humble care of his own farm, to come, with his whole house, and toil upon the rich man's fields, the requital for which is some poor grace of a week's or a month's forbearance, ere he be called on for that rent these exactions are preventing him from earning. Duty-labour summons him from his own profitless ground, to behold the fruits his exertions are raising for another's enjoyment, and of which he must never taste! Duty-labour culls the days of fairsky and sunshine, and leaves him the gloomy hours of winter, when, with darkness without, and despair within, he may brood, as he digs, over the disproportioned fortunes of his tyrant and himself! Duty-labour is the type of a slavery, that hardens the heart, by extinguishing all hope, and uprooting every feeling of self-confidence and reliance, till, in abject and degraded misery, the wretched man grows reckless of his life, while his vengeance yearns for that of his task master.

Nor does the system end here;—the agent must be conciliated by

presents of various kinds;—the humble pittance, wrung from misery, and hoarded up by industry, must be offered to him, as the means of obtaining some poor and petty favour, most frequently, one, the rightful due of the asker. A tyranny like this spreads its baneful influence far beyond the afflictions of mere poverty—it breaks down the spirit, it demoralizes the heart of a people; for where was black-mail ever extorted, that it did not engender cruelty on the one hand, and abject slavery on the other?

So far from regarding those placed above them in rank and station, as their natural friends and protectors, the peasantry felt the great man as their oppressor; they knew him not, as their comforter in sickness, their help in time of trouble—they only saw in him, the rigid exactor of his rent, the merciless task-master, who cared not for time or season, save those that brought round the period of repayment; and as, year by year, poverty and misery ate deeper into their natures, and hope died out, fearful thoughts of retribution flashed upon minds, on which no prospect of better days shone; and, in the gloomy desolation of their dark hours, they wished and prayed for any change, come in what shape, and surrounded by what danger it might, if only this bondage should cease.

Men spoke of their light-heartedness, their gaiety of temper, their flashing and brilliant wit. How little they knew that such qualities, by some strange incongruity of our natures, are the accompaniments of deeply-reflective and imaginative minds, overshadowed by lowering fortune. The glittering fancy, that seems to illumine the path of life, is often but the wild-fire that dances over the bleak and desolate heath.

Their apathy and indifference to exertion was made a matter of reproach to them; yet, was it ever known that toil should be voluntary, when hopeless, and that labour should be endured without a prospect of requital?

We have been led, almost unconsciously, into this somewhat lengthened digression, for which, even did it not bear upon the circumstances of our story, we would not seek to apologize to our reader. Such we believe to have been, in great part, the wrongs of Ireland—the fertile source of those thousand evils under which the land was suffering. From this one theme have arisen, most, if not all, the calamities of the country. Happy were it, if we could say that such existed no longer—that such a state of things was a matter for historical inquiry, or an old man's memory—and that in our own day, these instances were not to be found among us.

When Hemsworth perceived that the project of his life was in peril, he bethought him of every means by which the danger could be averted. Deep and well-founded as was his confidence in the cleverness of his deputy, his station was an insurmountable barrier to his utility at the present conjuncture. Sam Wylie, for so this worthy was called, was admirable as a spy, but never could be employed as minister plenipotentiary: it needed one, now, who should possess more influence over Sir Marmaduke himself. For this purpose, Frederick Travers alone seemed the fitting person; to him, therefore, Hemsworth wrote a letter marked "strictly confidential," detailing, with pains-taking accuracy, the inevitable misfortunes Sir Marmaduke's visit would entail upon a people, whose demands no benevolence could satisfy, whose expectations no concessions could content.

He narrated the fearful instances of their vengeance, whenever disappointment had checked the strong current of their hopes; and told, with all the semblance of truth, of scenes of bloodshed and murder, no cause for which could be traced, save in the dark suspicions of a people long accustomed to regard the Saxon as their tyrant.

The night attack upon "the Lodge" furnished also its theme of terror; and so artfully did he blend his fact and fiction, his true statement, and his false inference, that the young man read the epistle with an anxious and beating heart, and longed for the hour, when he should recal those he held dearest, from such a land of anarchy and misfortune.

Not satisfied with the immediate object in view, Hemsworth ingeniously contrived to instil into Frederick's mind misgivings as to the value of an estate thus circumstanced, representing, not without some truth on his side, that the only chance of bettering the condition of a peasantry so sunk and degraded, was by an actual residence in the midst of them, a penalty, which to the youth, seemed too dear for any requital whatever.

On a separate slip of paper, marked "to be burned when read," Frederick deciphered the following lines:—

"Above all things, I would caution you regarding a family who, though merely of the rank of farmer, affect a gentility which had its origin some dozen centuries back, and has had ample opportunity to leak out in the meantime; these are the 'O'Donoghues,' a dangerous set, haughty, ill-conditioned, and scheming. They will endeavour, if they can, to obtain influence with your father, and I cannot too strongly represent the hazard of such an event. Do not, I entreat you, suffer his compassion, or mistaken benevolence, to be exercised in their behalf. Were they merely unworthy, I should say nothing on the subject; but

they are highly and eminently dangerous, in a land, where their claims are regarded as only in abeyance—deferred, but not obliterated, by confiscation.

"E. H."

It would in no wise forward the views of our story, were we to detail to our readers the affecting scenes which preluded Frederick's departure from London, the explanations he was called on to repeat, as he went from house to house, for a journey at once so sudden and extraordinary; for even so late as fifty years ago, a visit to Ireland was a matter of more moment, and accompanied by more solemn preparation, than many now bestow on an overland journey to India. The Lady Marys and Bettys of the fashionable world regarded him pretty much as the damsels of old did some doughty knight, when setting forth on his way to Palestine. That filial affection could exact such an instance of devotion, called up their astonishment, even more than their admiration; and many were the cautions, many the friendly counsels, given to the youth for his preservation in a land so rife with danger.

Frederick was a soldier, and a brave one; but still, he was not entirely divested of those apprehensions which the ignorance of the day propagated; and although only accompanied by a single servant, they were both armed to the teeth, and prepared to do valiant battle, if need be, against the Irish "rogues and rapparees."

Here, then, for the present, we shall leave him, having made his last "adieux" to his friends, and set out on his journey to Ireland.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE COMMENTS ON A HURRIED DEPARTURE.

BRIEF as has been the interval of our absence from Glenflesk, time's changes have been there. Herbert O'Donoghue had experienced a fortunate change in his malady, and on the day following Roach's eventful return, became actually out of danger. The symptoms of his disease, so suddenly subdued, seemed to reflect immortal honour on the Doctor, who certainly did not scruple to attribute to his skill, what, with more truth, was owing to native vigour and youth. Sir Archy alone was ungrateful enough to deny the claim of physic, and slightly hinted to Roach, that he had at least benefited his patient by example, if not precept, since he had slept the entire night through, without awaking. The remark was a declaration of war, at once; nor was Roach slow to accept the gage of battle—in fact, both parties were well wearied of the truce, and anxious for the fray. Sir Archibald had only waited till the moment Roach's services in the sick-room could be safely dispensed with, to re-open his fire; while Roach, harassed by so unexpected a peace, felt like a beleaguered fortress during the operation of the miners, and knew not when, and how, the dreaded explosion was to occur. Now, however, the signal-gun was fired—hesitation was at an end; and, of a verity, the champions showed no disinclination for the field.

"Ye'll be hungry this morning, Doctor," said Sir Archy, "and I have ordered breakfast a bit early. A pick o' ham at twelve o'clock, and a quart of sherry, aye gives a man a relish for breakfast."

"Begad so it might, or for supper too," responded Roach, "when the ham was a shank bone, and the sherry-bottle like a four ounce mixture."

"Ye slept surprisingly after your slight refection. I heerd ye snoring like a grampus."

"'Twasn't the night-mare, from indigestion, any how," said Roach, with a grin. "I'll give you a clean bill of health from that malady here."

"It's weel for us, that we ken a cure for it—more than ye can say for the case you've just left."

"I saved the boy's life," said Roach indignantly.

"Assuredly ye did na kill him, and folks canna a'ways say as muckle for ye. We maun thank the Lord for a' his mercies; and he vouchsafed you, a vara sound sleep."

How this controversy was to be carried on further, it is not easy to say; but at this moment the door of the breakfast-room opened cautiously, and a wild rough head peeped stealthily in, which gradually was followed by the neck, and in succession the rest of the figure of Kerry O'Leary, who, dropping down on both knees before the Doctor, cried out in a most lamentable accent—

"Oh! Docther darlint—Docther dear—forgive me—for the love of Joseph, forgive me!"

Roach's temper was not in its blandest moment, and his face grew purple with passion, as he beheld the author of his misfortunes at his feet.

"Get out of my sight, you scoundrel, I never want to set eyes on you, till I see you in the dock—ay, with handcuffs on you."

"Oh, murther, murther, is it take the law of me, for a charge of swan drops? Oh, Docther acushla, don't say you'll do it."

"I'll have your life, as sure as my name's Roach."

"Try him wi' a draught," interposed M'Nab.

"Begorra, I'm willin'," cried Kerry, grasping at the mediation. "I'll take any thing, barrin' the black grease he gave the masther—that would kill the divil."

This exceptive compliment to his skill was not so acceptable to the Doctor, whose passion boiled over at the new indignity.

"I'll spend fifty guineas, but I'll hang you,—there's my word on it."

"Oh, wirra! wirra!" cried Kerry, whose apprehensions of how much law might be had for the money, made him tremble all over—"that's what I get for tramping the roads all night after the pony."

"Where's the pony—where's the gig?" called out Roach, suddenly reminded by material interests, that he had more at stake than mere vengeance.

"The beast is snug in the stable—that's where he is, eating a peck of oats—last year's corn—divil a less."

"And the gig?"

"Oh, the gig, is it? Musha, we have the gig too," responded Kerry, but with a reluctance that could not escape the shrewd questioner.

"Where is it, then?" said Roach, impatiently.

"Where would it be, but in the yard?—we're going to wash it."

The Doctor did not wait for the conclusion of this reply, but hastening from the room, passed down the few stairs that led towards the old

court-yard, followed by Sir Archy and Kerry, the one, eager to witness the termination of the scene—the other, muttering in a very different spirit—"Oh, but it's now we'll have the divil to pay!"

As soon as Roach arrived at the court-yard, he turned his eyes on every side, to seek his conveyance; but although there were old harrows, broken ploughs, and disabled wheel-barrows in numbers, nothing was there, that bore any resemblance to what he sought.

"Where is it?" said he, turning to Kerry, with a look of exasperation that defied all attempt to assuage by mere "blarney"—"where is it?"

"Here it is, then," said O'Leary, with the tone of one, whose courage was nerved by utter despair, while at the same time, he drew forth two wheels and an axle, the sole surviving members of the late vehicle. As he displayed the wreck before them, the ludicrous—always too strong for an Irish peasant, no matter how much it may be associated with his own personal danger—overcame his more discreet instincts, and he broke forth into a broad grin, while he cried—"'There's the inside of her, now!' as Darby Cossoon said, when he tuk his watch in pieces, 'and begorra, we'll see how she's made, any way!'"

This true history must not recount the expressions in which Roach permitted himself to indulge; it is enough to say, that his passion took the most violent form of invective, against the house, the glen, the family, and their retainers, to an extreme generation, while he stamped and gesticulated like one insane.

"Ye'll hae sma' space for yer luggage in yon," said M'Nab, with one of his driest laughs, while he turned back and re-entered the house.

"Where's my pony?—where's my pony?" shouted out the Doctor, determined to face all his calamities at once.

"Oh, faix, he's nothing the worse," said Kerry, as he unlocked the door of the stable, and pointed with all the pride of veracity to a beast in the stall before them. "There he is, jumping like a kid, out of his skin wid' fun this morning."

Now, although the first part of Kerry's simile was assuredly incorrect, as no kid, of which we have any record, ever bore the least resemblance to the animal in question, as to the fact of being "out of his skin," there could not be a second opinion, the beast being almost entirely flayed from his shoulders to his haunches, his eyes being represented by two globular masses, about the size of billiard-balls, and his tail bearing some affinity to an overgrown bamboo, as it hung down, jointed and knotted, but totally destitute of hair.

"The thief of the world," said Kerry, as he patted him playfully;

"he stripped a trifle of hair off him with kicking; but a little gunpowder and butter will bring it on again, in a day or two."

"Liar that thou art, Kerry—it would take a cask of one, and a firkin of the other to make up the necessary ointment!"

There are some evils which no anticipation can paint equal to their severity, and these, in compensation perhaps, are borne for the most part, without the same violent exuberance of sorrow lesser misfortunes elicit. So it was—Roach spoke not a word: one menace of his clenched hand towards Kerry, was the only token he gave of his malice, and he left the stable.

"I've a note here for Doctor Roach," said a servant, in Sir Marmaduke's livery, to Kerry, as he proceeded to close and lock the stable-door.

"I'm the person," said the Doctor, taking the billet and breaking the seal. "Have you the carriage here now?" asked he, when he had finished reading.

"Yes, sir, it's on the road. Sir Marmaduke desired me not to drive up, for fear of disturbing the sick gentleman."

"I'm ready, then," said the Doctor; "and never casting a look backward, nor vouchsafing another word, he passed out of the gate, and descended towards the high road.

"I'll take good care of the baste till I see you, sir," shouted Kerry after him; and then, as the distance widened, he added, "and may I never see your ould yallow wig agin, I pray this day. Divil take me, but I hope you've some of the slugs in ye, after all;" and with these pious wishes, expressed fervently, Kerry returned to the house, his heart considerably lightened by the Doctor's departure.

Scarcely was he seated beside the kitchen fire—the asylum he regarded as his own—when, all fears for his misconduct and its consequences past, he began speculating in a very Irish fashion, on the reasons of the Doctor's sudden departure.

"He's off now to 'the Lodge'—devil fear him—faix if he gets in there, they'll not get him out so asy—they'll have a pain for every day of the week before he leaves them. Well, well, thanks be to God, he's out of this."

"Is he gone, Kerry?" said Mrs. Branagan. "Did he leave a 'cure' for Master Herbert before he went?"

"Sorra bit," cried Kerry, as if a sudden thought struck him, "that's what he didn't!" and without hesitating another moment, he sprung from his chair, and mounted the stairs towards the parlour, where now the O'Donoghue, Mark, and Sir Archy were assembled at breakfast.

"He's away, sir, he's off again," said Kerry, as though the nature of his tidings did not demand any more ceremonious preliminary.

"Who's away? Who's gone?" cried they all in breath.

"The Doctor, sir, Doctor Roach. There was a chap in a sky-blue livery came up with a bit of a letter for him to go down there, and when he read it, he just turned about, this way," here Kerry performed a not over graceful pirouette, "and without saying by yer leave, he walks down the road and gets into the coach. 'Won't you see Master Herbert before you go, sir,' says I; 'sure you're not leaving him that way?' but bad luck to one word he'd say, but went away wid a grin on him."

"What!" cried Mark, as his face crimsoned with passion. "Is this true?—are you sure of what you're saying?"

"I'll take the book an it," said Kerry, solemnly.

"Well, Archy," said the O'Donoghue, addressing his brother-in-law. "You are a good judge of these matters. Is this conduct on the part of our neighbour suitable or becoming? Was it exactly right and proper to send here for one, whose services we had taken the trouble to seek, and might much have needed besides? Should we not have been consulted, think you?"

"There's not a poor farmer in the glen would not resent it!" cried Mark, passionately.

"Bide a wee, bide a wee," said Sir Archy, cautiously, "we hae na heard a' the tale yet. Roach may perhaps explain."

"He had better not come here, to do so," interrupted Mark, as he strode the room in passion; "he has a taste for hasty departures, and, by G—, I'll help him to one; for out of that window he goes, as sure as my name is Mark."

"'Tis the way to serve him, divil a doubt," chimed in Kerry, who was not sorry to think how agreeably he might thus be relieved from any legal difficulties.

"I am no seeking to excuse the man," said Sir Archy, temperately. "It's weel kenned we hae na muckle love for ane anither; but fair play is bonnie play."

"I never heard a mean action yet, but there was a Scotch adage to warrant it," muttered Mark, in a whisper inaudible by the rest.

"Its no' improbable but that Sir Marmaduke Travers did ask if the Doctor could be spared, and it's no' impossible, either, that Roach took the answering the question in his ain hands."

"I don't think so," broke in Mark; "the whole thing bears a different aspect. It smacks of English courtesy to an Irish kern."

"By Jove, Mark is right," said the O'Donoghue, whose prejudices, strengthened by poverty, too readily chimed in with any suspicion of intended insult.

"They were not long learning the game," said Mark, bitterly; "they are, if I remember aright, scarce two months in the country, and, see, they treat us as 'mere Irish' already.

"Ye'r ower hasty, Mark. I hae na muckle respect for Roach, nor wad I vouch for his good breeding; but a gentleman, as this Sir Marmaduke's note bespeaks him——."

"What note? I never heard of it."

"Oh! it was a polite kind of message, Mark, to say he would be obliged if I permitted him to pay his respects here. I forget to tell you of it."

"Does the enemy desire a peep at the fortress, that he may calculate how long we can hold out?" said the youth, sternly.

"Begorra, with the boys from Ballyvourney and Inchigeela, we'll howld the place agin the English army," said Kerry, mistaking the figurative meaning of the speech; and he rubbed his hands with delight at the bare prospect of such a consummation.

Sir Archy turned an angry look towards him, and motioned with his hand for him to leave the room. Kerry closed the door after him, and for some minutes the silence was unbroken.

"What does it matter after all?" said the O'Donoghue, with a sigh. "It is a mere folly to care for these things, now. When the garment is worn and threadbare, one need scarce fret that the lace is a little tarnished."

"True, sir, quite true; but you are not bound to forget or forgive him, who would strip it rudely off, even a day or an hour before its time."

"There is na muckle good in drawing inferences from imaginary evils. Shadows are a' bad enough; but they needna hae children and grandchildren; and so I'll even take a cup o' tea to the callant;" and thus, wise in practice and precept, Sir Archibald left the room, while O'Donoghue and Mark, already wearied of the theme, ceased to discuss it further.

CHAPTER XV.

SOME OF THE PLEASURES OF PROPERTY.

In the small, but most comfortable apartment of the Lodge, which in virtue of its book-shelves and smartly bound volumes was termed "the Study," sat Sir Marmaduke Travers. Before him was a table covered with writing materials, books, pamphlets, prints, and drawings; his great arm-chair was the very ideal of lounging luxury, and in the soft carpet his slippered feet were almost hidden. Through the window at his right hand, an alley in the beech-wood opened a view of mountain scenery, it would have been difficult to equal in any country of Europe. In a word, it was a very charming little chamber, and might have excited the covetousness of those whose minds must minister to their maintenance, and who rarely pursue their toilsome task, save debarred from every sound and sight that might foster imagination. How almost invariably is this the case! Who has not seen, a hundred times over, some perfect little room, every detail of whose economy seemed devised to sweeten the labour of the mind, teeming with its many appliances for enjoyment, yet encouraging thought more certainly than ministering to luxury—with its cabinet pictures, its carvings, its antique armour, suggestive in turn of some passage in history, or some page in fiction;—who has not seen these devoted to the half hour lounge over a newspaper, or the tiresome examination of house expenditure with the steward, while he, whose mental flights were soaring midway 'twixt earth and heaven, looked out from some gloomy and cobwebbed pane upon a forest of chimneys, surrounded by all the evils of poverty, and tortured by the daily conflict with necessity.

Here sat Sir Marmaduke, a great volume like a ledger open before him, in which, from time to time, he employed himself in making short memoranda. Directly in front of him stood, in an attitude of respectful attention, a man of about five-and-forty years of age, who, although dressed in an humble garb, had yet a look of something above the common; his features were homely, but intelligent, and though a quick sharp glance shot from his grey eye when he spoke, yet in his soft, smooth voice the words came forth with a measured calm, that served to indicate a patient and gentle disposition. His frame betokened

strength, while his face was pale and colourless, and without the other indications of active health in his gait and walk, would have implied a delicacy of constitution. This was Sam Wylie the sub-agent—one whose history may be told in a few words :—His father had been a butler in the O'Donoghue house, where he died, leaving his son, a mere child, as a legacy to his master. The boy, however, did not turn out well; delinquencies of various kinds—theft among the number—were discovered against him ; and after many, but ineffectual efforts, to reclaim him, he was turned off, and advised, as he wished to escape worse, to leave the county. He took the counsel, and did so; nor for many a year after was he seen or heard of. A report ran that he passed fourteen years in transportation ; but however that might be, when he next appeared in Kerry, it was in the train of a civil engineer, come to make surveys of the county. His cleverness and skill in this occupation recommended him to the notice of Hemsworth, who soon after appointed him as bailiff, and, subsequently, sub-agent on the estate; and in this capacity he had now served about fifteen years, to the perfect satisfaction, and with the full confidence of his chief. Of his "antecedents," Sir Marmaduke knew nothing; he was only aware of the implicit trust Hemsworth had in him, and his own brief experience perfectly concurred in the justice of the opinion. He certainly found him intelligent, and thoroughly well-informed on all connected with the property. When questioned, his answers were prompt, direct, and to the purpose; and to one of Sir Marmaduke's business habits, this quality possessed merit of the highest order. If he had a fault with him, it was one he could readily pardon—a leniency towards the people—a desire to palliate their errors and extenuate their failings—and always to promise well for the future, even when the present looked least auspicious. His hearty concurrence with all the old baronet's plans for improvement were also highly in his favour; and already Wylie was looked on as "a very acute fellow, and with really wonderful shrewdness for his station;" as if any of that acuteness or that shrewdness, so estimated, could have its growth in a more prolific soil, than in the heart and mind of one bred and reared among the people ; who knew their habits, their tone of thinking, their manners, and their motives—not through any false medium of speculation and theory, but practically, innately, instinctively —who had not studied the peasantry like an algebraic formula, or a problem in Euclid, but read them, as they sat beside their turf fires, in the smoke of their mud hovels, cowering from the cold of winter, and gathering around the scanty meal of potatoes—the only tribute they had not rendered to the landlord.

"Roger Sweeny," said Sir Marmaduke—"Roger Sweeny complains of his distance from the bog; he cannot draw his turf so easily, as when he lived on that swamp below the lake; but I think the change ought to recompense him for the inconvenience."

"He's a Ballyvourney man, your honour," said Sam, placidly, "and if you couldn't bring the turf up to his door, and cut it for him, and stack it, and carry a creel of it inside, to make the fire, he'd not be content."

"Oh, that's it—is it?" said Sir Marmuduke, "accepting an explanation he was far from thoroughly understanding. "Then here's Jack Heffernan —what does this fellow mean, by saying that a Berkshire pig is no good?"

"He only means, your honour, that he's too good for the place, and wants better food than the rest of the family."

"The man's a fool, and must learn better. Lord Mudford told me that he never saw such an excellent breed, and his swine-herd is one of the most experienced fellows in England. Widow Mul—Mul—what?" said he, endeavouring to spell an unusually long name in the book before him—"Mulla——"

"Mullahedert, your honour," slipped in Wylie, "a very dacent crayture."

"Then why won't she keep those bee-hives; can't she see what an excellent thing honey is in a house—if one of her children was sick, for instance?"

"True for you, sir," said Sam, without the slightest change of feature. "It is wonderful how your honour can have the mind to think of these things—upon my word, it's surprising."

"Samuel M'Elroy refuses to drain the field—does he?"

"No, sir; but he says the praties isn't worth digging out of dry ground, nor never does grow to any size. He's a Ballyvourney man, too, sir."

"Oh, is he?" said Sir Marmaduke, accepting this as a receipt in full for any degree of eccentricity.

"Shamus M'Gillicuddy—heavens what a name! This Shamus appears a very desperate fellow; he beat a man the other evening, coming back from the market."

"It was only a neighbour, sir; they live fornint each other."

"A neighbour! but bless my heart, that makes it worse."

"Sure, sir, it was nothing to speak of; it was Darby Lenahan said your honour's bull was a pride to the place, and Shamus said the O'Donoghue's was a finer baste any day; and from one word they came to another, and the end of it was, Lenahan got a crack on the scull that laid him quivering on the daisies."

"Savage ruffian, that Shamus; I'll keep a sharp eye on him."

"Faix, and there's no need—he's a Ballyvourney man."

The old baronet looked up from his large volume, and seemed for a moment undecided whether he should not ask the meaning of a phrase, which, occurring at every moment, appeared most perplexing in signification; but the thought that by doing so, he should confess his ignorance before the sub-agent, deterred him, and he resolved to leave the interpretation to time and his own ingenuity.

"What of this old fellow, who has the mill?—has he consented to have the overshot wheel?"

"He tried it on Tuesday, sir," said Sam, with an almost imperceptible smile, "and the sluice gave way, and carried off the house and the end of the barn into the tail race. He's gone in, to take an action again your honour for the damages."

"Ungrateful rascal! I told him I'd be at the whole expense myself, and I explained the great saving of water the new wheel would ensure him."

"True, indeed, sir; but as the stream never went dry for thirty years, the ould idiot thought it would last his time. Begorra, he had enough of water on Tuesday, anyhow."

"He's a Ballyvourney man, isn't he?"

"He is sir," replied Wylie, with the gravity of a judge.

Another temptation crossed Sir Marmaduke's mind, but he withstood it, and went on—

"The mountain has then been divided as I ordered, has it?"

"Yes, sir; the lines were all marked out before Saturday."

"Well, I suppose the people were pleased to know, that they have, each, their own separate pasturage?"

"Indeed, and, sir, I won't tell you a lie—they are not; they'd rather it was the ould way still."

"What, have I taken all this trouble for nothing then?—is it possible that they'd rather have their cattle straying wild about the country, than see them grazing peaceably on their own land?"

"That's just it, sir; for, you see, when they had the mountain among them, they fed on what they could get; one, had maybe a flock of goats, another, maybe a sheep or two, a heifer, an ass, or a bullsheen.

"A what?"

"A little bull, your honour; and they didn't mind if one had more nor another, nor where they went, for the place was their own; but now, that it is all marked out and divided, begorra, if a beast is got trespassing, out comes some one with a stick, and wallops him back again,

and then the man that owns him, natural enough, would'nt see shame on his cow, or whatever it was, and that leads to a fight; and faix, there's not a day now, but there's blood spilt over the same boundaries."

"They're actually savages!" said Sir Marmaduke, as he threw his spectacles over his forehead, and dropped his pen from his fingers in mute amazement; "I never heard—I never read of such a people."

"They're Ballyvourney men," chimed in Wylie, assentively.

"D——d——"

Sir Marmaduke checked himself suddenly, for the idea flashed on him that he ought at least to know what he was cursing, and so he abstained from such a perilous course, and resumed his search in the big volume. Alas! his pursuit of information was not more successful as he proceeded: every moment disclosed some case, where, in his honest efforts to improve the condition of the people, from ignorance of their habits, from total unconsciousness of the social differences of two nations, essentially unlike, he discovered the failure of his plans, and unhesitatingly ascribed to the prejudices of the peasantry, what with more justice might have been charged against his own unskilfulness. He forgot that a people long neglected cannot at once be won back—that confidence is a plant of slow growth; but more than all, he lost sight of the fact, that to engraft the customs and wants of richer communities, upon a people sunk in poverty and want—to introduce among them new and improved modes of tillage—to inculcate notions which have taken ages to grow up to maturity, in more favoured lands, must be attended with failure and disappointment. On both sides the elements of success were wanting. The peasantry saw—for, however strange it may seem, through every phase of want and wretchedness their intelligence and apprehension suffer no impairment—they saw his anxiety to serve them; they believed him to be kind-hearted and well-wishing, but they knew him to be also wrong-headed and ignorant of the country, and what he gained on the score of good feeling, he lost on the score of good sense; and Paddy, however humble his lot, however hard his condition, has an innate reverence for ability, and can rarely feel attachment to the heart, where he has not felt respect for the head. It is not a pleasant confession to make, yet one might explain it without detriment to the character of the people, but assuredly, popularity in Ireland would seem to depend far more on intellectual resources, than on moral principle and rectitude. Romanism has fostered this feeling, so natural is it to the devotee to regard power and goodness as inseparable, and to associate the holiness of religion, with the sway and influence of the priesthood. If the tenantry regarded the landlord as a simple-hearted,

crotchety old gentleman with no harm in him, the landlord believed them to be almost incurably sunk in barbarism and superstition. Their native courtesy in declining to accept suggestions they never meant to adopt, he looked on as duplicity; he could not understand that the matter-of-fact sternness of English expression has no parallel here; that politeness, as they understood it, has a claim, to which truth itself may be sacrificed; and he was ever accepting in a literal sense, what the people intended to be received with its accustomed qualification.

But a more detrimental result followed than even these: the truly well-conducted and respectable portion of the tenantry felt ashamed to adopt plans and notions they knew inapplicable and unsuited to their condition; they therefore stood aloof, and by their honest forbearance incurred the reproach of obstinacy and barbarism; while the idle, the lazy, and the profligate, became converts to any doctrine or class of opinion, which promised an easy life and the rich man's favour. These, at first sight, found favour with him, as possessing more intelligence and tractibility than their neighbours, and for them, cottages were built, rents abated, improved stock introduced, and a hundred devices organized to make them an example for all imitation. Unhappily the conditions of the contract were misconceived: the people believed that all the landlord required was a patient endurance of his benevolence; they never reckoned on any reciprocity in duty; they never dreamed that a Swiss cottage cannot be left to the fortunes of a mud cabin; that stagnant pools before the door, weed-grown fields, and broken fences, harmonize ill with rural pailings, drill cultivation, and trim hedges. They took all they could get, but assuredly they never understood the obligation of repayment. They thought (not very unreasonably perhaps), "it's the old gentleman's hobby that we should adopt a number of habits and customs we were never used to—live in strange houses and work with strange tools. Be it so; we are willing to gratify him," said they, "but let him pay for his whistle."

He, on the other hand, thought they were greedily adopting what they only endured, and deemed all converts to his opinion who lived on his bounty. Hence, each morning presented an array of the most worthless, irreclaimable of the tenantry around his door, all eagerly seeking to be included in some new scheme of regeneration, by which they understood three meals a day and nothing to do.

How to play off these two distinct and very opposite classes, Mr. Sam Wylie knew to perfection; and while he made it appear that one portion of the tenantry whose rigid rejection of Sir Marmaduke's doctrines proceeded from a sturdy spirit of self-confidence and indepen-

dence, were a set of wild, irreclaimable savages; he softly insinuated his compliments on the success in other quarters, while, in his heart he well knew what results were about to happen

"They're here now, sir," said Wylie, as he glanced through the window towards the lawn, where, with rigid punctuality Sir Marmaduke each morning held his levee; and where, indeed, a very strange and motley crowd appeared.

The old baronet threw up the sash, and as he did so, a general murmur of blessings and heavenly invocations met his ears—sounds, that if one were to judge from his brightening eye and beaming countenance, he relished well. No longer, however, as of old, suppliant, and entreating, with tremulous voice and shrinking gaze did they make their advances. These people were now enlisted in his army of "regenerators;' they were converts to the landlords manifold theories of improved agriculture, neat cottages, pig-styes, dove-cots, bee-hives, and heaven knows what other suggestive absurdity, ease and affluence ever devised to plate over the surface of rude and rugged misery.

"The Lord bless your honour every morning you rise, 'tis the iligant little place ye gave me to live in. Musha, 'tis happy and comfortable I do be every night, now, barrin' that the slates does be falling betimes—bad luck to them for slates, one of them cut little Joe's head this morning, and I brought him up for a bit of a plaster."

This was the address of a stout, middle-aged woman, with a man's great coat around her in lieu of a cloak.

"Slates falling—why doesn't your husband fasten them on again? he said he was a handy fellow, and could do any thing about a house."

"It was no lie then; Thady Morris is a good warrant for a job any day, and if it was thatch was on it——"

"Thatch—why, woman, I'll have no thatch; I don't want the cabins burned down, nor will I have them the filthy hovels they used to be."

"Why would your honour?—sure there's rayson and sinse agin it," was the chorus of all present, while the woman resumed—

"Well, he tried that same too, your honour, and if he did, by my sowl, it was worse for him, for when he seen the slates going off every minit with the wind, he put the harrow on the top——"

"The harrow—put the harrow on the roof?"

"Just so—wasn't it natural? But as sure as the wind riz, down came the harrow, and stript every dirty kippeen of a slate away with it."

"So the roof is off," said Sir Marmaduke with stifled rage.

"Tis as clean as my five fingers, the same rafters," said she with unmoved gravity.

"This is too bad—Wylie, do you hear this?" said the old gentleman, with a face dark with passion.

"Aye," chorused in some half dozen friends of the woman—"nothing stands the wind like the thatch."

Wylie whispered some words to his master, and by a side gesture, motioned to the woman to take her departure. The hint was at once taken, and her place immediately filled by another. This was a short little old fellow, in yellow rags, his face concealed by a handkerchief, on removing which, he discovered a countenance that bore no earthly resemblance to that of a human being: the eyes were entirely concealed by swollen masses of cheek and eye-lid—the nose might have been eight noses—and the round immense lips, and the small aperture between, looked like the opening in a ballot-box.

"Who is this?—what's the matter here?" said Sir Marmaduke, as he stared in mingled horror and astonishment at the object before him.

"Faix, ye may well ax," said the little man, in a thick guttural voice. "Sorra one of the neighbours knew me this morning. I'm Tim M'Garrey, of the cross-roads."

"What has happened to you then?" asked Sir Marmaduke, somewhat ruffled by the sturdy tone of the ragged fellow's address.

"'Tis your own doing, then—divil a less—you may be proud of your work."

"My doing!—how do you dare to say so?"

"'Tis no darin' at all—'tis thrue, as I'm here. Them bloody beehives you made me take home wid me, I put them in a corner of the house, and by bad luck it was the pig's corner, and, sorra bit, but she rooted them out, and upset them, and with that, the varmint fell upon us all, and it was two hours before we killed them—divil such a fight ever ye seen: Peggy had the beetle, and I the griddle, for flattening them agin the wall, and maybe we didn't work hard, while the childer was roarin' and bawlin' for the bare life."

"Gracious mercy, would this be credited?—could any man conceive barbarism like this?" cried Sir Marmaduke, as with uplifted hands he stood overwhelmed with amazement.

Wylie again whispered something, and again telegraphed to the applicant to move off; but the little man stood his ground and continued. "'Twas a heifer you gave Tom Lenahan, and it's a dhroll day, the M'Garrey's warn't as good as the Lenahans, to say we'd have nothing but bees, and them was to get a dacent baste!"

"Stand aside, sir," said Sir Marmaduke; "Wylie has got my orders about you. Who is this?"

"Faix, me, sir—Andrew Maher. I'm come to give your honour the key—I couldn't stop there any longer."

"What! not stay in that comfortable house, with the neat shop I had built and stocked for you? What does this mean?"

"'Tis just that, then, your honour—the house is a nate little place, and barrin' the damp, and the little grate, that won't burn turf at all, one might do well enough in it; but the shop is the divil entirely."

"How so—what's wrong about it?"

"Every thing's wrong about it. First and foremost, your honour, the neighbours has no money; and though they might do mighty well for want of tobacco, and spirits, and bohea, and candles, and soap, and them trifles, as long as they never came near them, throth they couldn't have them there fornint their noses, without wishing for a taste; and so one comes in for a pound of sugar, and another wants a ha'porth of nails, or a piece of naygar-head, or an ounce of starch—and divil a word they have, but 'put it in the book, Andy.' By my conscience, it's a quare book would hould it all."

"But they'll pay in time—they'll pay when they sell the crops."

"Bother! I ax yer honour's pardon—I was manin' they'd see me far enough first. Sure, when they go to market, they'll have the rint, and the tithe, and the taxes; and when that's done, and they get a sack of seed potatoes for next year, I'd like to know where's the money that's to come to me?"

"Is this true, Wylie?—are they as poor as this?" asked Sir Marmaduke.

Wylie's answer was still a whispered one.

"Well," said Andy, with a sigh, "there's the key any way. I'd rather be tachin' the gaffers again, than be keeping the same shop."

These complaints were followed by others, differing in kind and complexion, but all, agreeing in the violence with which they were urged, and all, inveighing against "the improvements" Sir Marmaduke was so interested in carrying forward. To hear them, you would suppose that the grievances suggested by poverty and want, were more in unison with comfort and enjoyment, than all the appliances wealth can bestow: and that the privations to which habit has inured us, are sources of greater happiness, than we often feel in the use of unrestricted liberty.

Far from finding any contented, Sir Marmaduke only saw a few among the number, willing to endure his bounties, as the means of obtaining other concessions they desired more ardently. They would keep their cabins clean, if any thing was to be made by it: they'd weed

their potatoes, if Sir Marmaduke would only offer a price for the weeds. In fact, they were ready to engage in any arduous pursuit of cleanliness, decency, and propriety, but it must be for a consideration. Otherwise, they saw no reason for encountering labour, which brought no requital; and the *real* benefits offered to them, came so often associated with new-fangled and absurd innovations, that, both became involved in the same disgrace, and both sunk in the same ridicule together. These were the refuse of the tenantry; for we have seen that the independent feeling of the better class held them aloof from all the schemes of "improvement," which the others, by participating in, contaminated.

Sir Marmaduke might, then, be pardoned, if he felt some sinking of the heart at his failure; and, although encouraged by his daughter to persevere in his plan to the end, more than once he was on the brink of abandoning the field in discomfiture, and confessing that the game was above his skill. Had he but taken one-half the pains to learn something of national character, that he bestowed on his absurd efforts to fashion it to his liking, his success might have been different. He would, at least, have known how to distinguish between the really deserving, and the unworthy recipients of his bounty—between the honest and independent peasant, earning his bread by the sweat of his brow, and the miserable dependant, only seeking a life of indolence, at any sacrifice of truth or character; and even this knowledge, small as it may seem, will go far in appreciating the difficulties which attend all attempts at Irish social improvement, and explain much of the success or failure observable in different parts of the country. But Sir Marmaduke fell into the invariable error of his countrymen—he first suffered himself to be led captive, by "blarney," and when heartily sick of the deceitfulness and trickery of those who employed it, coolly sat down with the conviction, that there was no truth in the land.

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